



Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/1066
15 October 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 15 OCTOBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement I intended to make in the meeting of the Security Council on 15 October 1999, when the Council was considering the question of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, owing to problems associated with timing, the statement was not made at the meeting.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its enclosure circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hadi NEJAD HOSSEINIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Enclosure

Statement of Hadi Nejad Hosseini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations before the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan

New York, 15 October 1999

By adopting this draft resolution, today, the Security Council takes action against the Taliban faction which has turned the Afghan territory under its control into a safe haven for terrorists and allowed them to operate a network of training camps and sponsor international terrorism. This is a small step in the right direction and the Islamic Republic of Iran supports it. However, we are disappointed that the Security Council did not adopt a more comprehensive approach to the chronic conflict in Afghanistan and fear that the Taliban would receive the wrong signal, interpreting the primary focus of the resolution as the only concern of the international community in Afghanistan.

We believe that terrorism is only one of the many side effects of the lingering conflict, resulting from the chaotic situation prevailing in Afghanistan over the past two decades. Continued violence and bloodshed, a humanitarian crisis, gross violations of humanitarian law, persecution of ethnic and religious minorities, rising traffic in drugs and unresolved refugee problems are among other equally, if not more, important by-products of the continued conflict in that country. They cannot be addressed effectively and adequately unless the Security Council takes a resolute action to stop the fighting as the root cause of the agony and suffering of the Afghan people and the instability and lingering problems in the region and beyond. As long as peace and reconciliation are elusive, any remedy to any particular aspect of the Afghan crisis will turn out to be of a palliative nature only.

It is now obvious that the intransigent attitude of the Taliban, in defiance of numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, has been, in turn, the root cause of the stalemate in the peace process in Afghanistan. In his latest report on Afghanistan (A/54/378-S/1999/994) the Secretary-General wrote: "it is profoundly disturbing that only one week after the meeting of the 'six plus two' group in Tashkent on 19/20 July, the Taliban forces started a new military offensive. This flagrant disregard for the Tashkent Declaration once again raises serious concerns about the intention of the Taliban leadership, which evidently continues to believe in a military solution to the Afghan conflict". In this report, the Secretary-General urged the Taliban leadership to accept the repeated offer made by the United Front to enter into serious political negotiations in order to reach a solution to the country's problems.

Therefore, we are of the view that the Security Council should have brought its full weight and influence to bear in Afghanistan and thus send the right message to all players in Afghanistan, including the Taliban leadership, who, evidently because of the political and military support it receives from outside, has so far disregarded the international call for engaging in the peace

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negotiations. Effective pressure on the Taliban must be exercised with a view to inducing it to stop its military policy and recognize that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. To this end, we believe that the Council needs to contemplate another resolution in which the question of Afghanistan is treated as a whole.

After more than one year, the issue of the tragic murder of the staff of the Consulate-General of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic News Agency's correspondent in Mazar-e-Sharif by the Taliban forces in the wake of their offensive against this northern Afghan city in August 1998 is still pending and remains unresolved. The Taliban, as the international community, including the Council itself, is fully aware, continues to stubbornly disregard international law and have yet to implement Security Council resolution 1214 (1998) by which the Council condemned this crime, and called upon "the Taliban to cooperate with the United Nations in investigating these crimes with a view to prosecuting those responsible". I would like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to pursue vigorously the matter to a conclusion in which justice is served. We remain hopeful that the Council and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General will continue their valuable efforts in this regard.

In conclusion, I shall not fail to express our gratitude to our distinguished Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Ambassador Brahimi, as well as the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan for their dedicated and tireless work, which only appears unrecognized and unrewarding. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran highly values, fully supports and will continue to coordinate its efforts with Ambassador Brahimi's endeavours aimed at bringing peace and normalcy to Afghanistan. In our view, such efforts are indispensable if the situation in Afghanistan is not to deteriorate even further.
